(a) whether Government is aware that execution of many new railway lines projects in Tamil Nadu sanctioned by the Railway Board are not taken up; and

(b) if so, the initiatives taken by Government for an early execution of the said railway projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) New line projects are being progressed as per availability of resources. A number of initiatives have been taken to generate additional resources through non-budgetary measures like public/private partnership, funding by State Governments and other beneficiaries to expedite progress of ongoing projects.

Formation of Monitoring Committees

1017. SHRI N. BALAGANGA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether her Ministry has formed Monitoring Committees as announced by her in the Budget for the year 2009-10;

(b) whether Monitoring Committees are empowered to take decisions on the setbacks noticed in the ongoing railway projects; and

(c) if so, the details of the powers vested with Monitoring Committees?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. A Project Monitoring Group (PMG) has been formed to monitor the implementation of projects. The PMG will monitor performance *vis-à-vis* targets of the projects and suggest remedial actions wherever necessary.

Pending works of B.G. conversion in Tamil Nadu

1018. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the status of pending works of broad gauge conversion in Tamil Nadu;

(b) the time-frame for completion of such pending items;

(c) whether it is a fact that enough attention has not been given for the safety and security aspects in Railways; and

(d) whether allocation given for these items are not spent or diverted elsewhere?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) Status of ongoing gauge conversion work falling fully/partly in the State of Tamil Nadu and their time-frame for completion, wherever fixed, is as under:—

Sl. No.	Gauge Conversion Project	Status and time-frame for completion, wherever fixed
1	2	3
1.	Villupuram-Katpadi (161 km)	Work on Katpadi-Vellore (10 km) completed and entire balance portion is targeted for completion during 2009-10.

1	2	3
2.	Manamadurai-Virudhunagar (66.55 km)	Earthwork, bridgeworks and ballast supply have been taken up.
3.	Dindigul-Pollachi-Palghat and Pollachi-Coimbatore (224.88 km)	Work on Podanur-Coimbatore (6 km) completed. On the balance portion, earthwork, bridgeworks and ballast supply have been taken up.
4.	Mayiladuturai-Tiruvarur-Karaikudi and Tiruturaipundi-Agastiyampalli (224 km)	Earthwork, bridgeworks and ballast supply have been taken up on Mayiladuturai-Tiruvarur section (38 km). Final location survey for Tiruvarur-Karaikudi section (149 km) has been taken up.
5.	Madurai-Bodinayakkanur (90.41 km)	Tenders have been processed for major bridge works.
6.	Quilon-Tirunelveli-Tiruchendur and and Tenkasi-Virudhunagar (357 km)	Work on Virudhunagar-Tenkasi-Sengottai and Tirunelveli-Tiruchendur (190 km) completed. Work on balance Quilon-Punalur is targeted for completion during 2009-10. Work on balance portion is in various stages of progress.
7.	Thanjavur-Villupuram (192 km)	Work is nearing completion.
8.	Tiruchchirappalli-Nagore-Karaikal (200 km) with extension of Nagapattinam-Velankanni-Tiruturaipundi *via* Tirukkuvalai (43 km)	Trichy-Nagore (135 km) gauge conversion has been completed. The work of new line for Nagapattinam-Velankanni (10.3 km) and Nagore-Karaikal (11 km) are targeted for completion in 2009-10.

Target of completion for projects, wherever fixed, is given above and completion of remaining projects would depend upon availability of resources.

(c) No, Sir. Safety and Security of trains, passengers etc. are given the highest priority. All possible steps are undertaken on a continuing basis to prevent accidents, as a result of which, there has been a declining trend in the number of Consequential Train Accidents over Indian Railways. As regards security, steps have been taken for modernization of RPF for which work of integrated security system has been taken up to strengthen surveillance mechanism over 195 sensitive and vulnerable stations. Other steps include, escorting of trains, modernization of RPF, amendment in RPF Act to increase role/responsibility of RPF to prevent theft, pilferage, etc.

(d) Funds provided on Safety and Security works are being spent for this purpose only and are not diverted for any other activity.